

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: NA/A

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SUBJ: PERONS HOLDS YEAR-END NEWS CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT PERON IN A YEAR-END NEWS CONFERENCE TOUCHED ON AMONG OTHER TOPICS, ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH URUGUAY (SEPTEL), CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION, EX-ARMY COMMANDER CARCAGNO, YACYRECTA-APIPE, AND THE CONGRESSIONAL WORK SCHEDULE. PERON WAS IN COMPLETE COMMAND DURING HIS 55 MINUTE MEETING WITH THE PRESS AND FROM THE TONE OF HIS REMARKS HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS WELL SATISFIED WITH HIS FIRST MONTHS IN OFFICE.
END SUMMARY.

2. PERONS NEARLY ONE HOUR MEETING WITH THE PRESS DURING WHICH HE ENTERTAINED QUESTIONS ON A WIDE VARIETY OF SUBJECTS WILL BE THE PATTERN FOR FUTURE PRESS CONFERENCES THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED. BELOW ARE HIS ANSWERS TO THE MOST SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS.

3. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM--PERON DECLARED THAT THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH HAS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECIDING QUESTIONS WITH RESPECT TO CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. HE SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT CONGRESS MUST DECIDE WHEN TO CALL
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A CONVENTION, THUS DECLINING TO GIVE HIS VIEWS ON TIMING.

ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NEW CONSTITUTION, AS FOR EXAMPLE ALTERING THE PRESIDENTIAL TERM, PERON SAID HE WOULD SUPPORT THE DECISION OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. THIS ENTITY, IF CONVOCKED, WOULD BE SOVEREIGN, AND THUS IT WOULD BE IMPROPER FOR HIM TO GIVE HIS OPINIONS ON MATTERS WHICH A CONVENTION SHOULD DECIDE. ASKED IF INTEREST GROUPS, SPECIFICALLY THE CGT AND CGE, WOULD ELECT REPRESENTATIVES TO A CONVENTION, PERON REPLIED NEGATIVELY. HE SAID NO CHANGES WOULD BE MADE TO THE RULES ON SELECTION OF DELEGATES. (COMMENT: IF PRESENT RULES ARE APPLIED, THE DELEGATES WOULD BE ELECTED DIRECTLY WITH NO POSITIONS RESERVED FOR ANY CORPORATE BODIES SUCH AS THE CGT OR CGE.) WHILE THE JUSTICIALISTAS WOULD, AS IS THEIR CUSTOM, HAVE SECTOR REPRESENTATION (LABOR, BUSINESS AND POLITICAL), PERON OBSERVED THAT THE OVERALL MAKEUP OF THE CONVENTION WOULD BE IN PROPORTION TO THEIR POLITICAL STRENGTH.

4. POLITICAL OPPOSITION: PERON EXPRESSED HIS SATISFACTION WITH THE ACTIONS OF THE OPPOSITION: IT HAS SHOWN ITSELF TO BE DEMOCRATIC AND WILLING TO ADVANCE ITS IDEAS THROUGH DISCUSSION RATHER THAN BY FIGHTING. ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT, THE POLITICAL PANORAMA COULD NOT BE MORE BRIGHT OR PROMISING.

5. GENERAL CARCAGNO--ASKED IF CARCAGNO'S REMOVAL AS ARMY COMMANDER MEANT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD CHANGED ITS VIEWS OF THE ROLE THE ARMY SHOULD PLAY IN A PERIOD OF "RECONSTRUCTIONS," PERON AFTER SOME WAFLING REPLIED NEGATIVELY. CARCAGNO, HE SAID, LEFT BECAUSE OF SOME "DISCREPANCIES" (UNSPECIFIED) AND, AS *S THE CUSTOM AMONG "US MILITARY MEN", HE RESPONDED BY COMING TO ATTENTION, SALUTING AND LEAVING QUIETLY.

6. YACYRETE-APIPE--PERON ASSURED THE NEWSMEN THAT HE FORESAW NO PROBLEM IN CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO THE *RECENTLY CONCLUDED TREATY WITH PARAGUAY AND EXPECTED IT TO BE APPROVED SHORTLY. PERHAPS WITH TONGUE-IN-CHEEK, PERON OBSERVED THAT THE RECORD TIME IN WHICH THE PARAGUYANS APPROVED THE TREATY REFLECTED THEIR 25 YEARS OF STABILITY THAT HAS LEFT THE LEGISLATURE WITHOUT MUCH WORK.

7. CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE-- PERON SAID CONGRESS STANDS READY TO FOREGO ITS SUMMER VACATION AND REMAIN IN SESSION DURING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JAN AND FEB TO DEAL WITH THE BACKLOG OF PENDING LEGISLATION.

8. COMMENT: A NOTEWORTHY ELEMENT IN PERON'S PRESS CONFERENCE WAS HIS APPARENT ATTEMPT TO UTILIZE THE FORMAL ROLE OF CONGRESS IN CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AS A MEANS OF INSULATING HIMSELF FROM THE DIRECT EFFECTS OF WHAT WILL CERTAINLY BE A CONTROVERSIAL AND LONG PLAYING ISSUE.

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